



**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**  
**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. KBB 2005 - 81**

***DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY FOR CONTROL AND  
DISPOSITION OF HUMAN REMAINS***

- WHEREAS,** pursuant to the Louisiana Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, R.S. 29:721, et seq., a state of emergency was declared through Proclamation No. 48 KBB 2005, amended by Proclamation Nos. 54 KBB 2005 and 61 KBB 2005, and Proclamation No. 53 KBB 2005, amended by Proclamation No. 60 KBB 2005;
- WHEREAS,** Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the state of Louisiana causing severe flooding and damage to the southern part of the state which threatened the safety, health, and security of the citizens of the state of Louisiana, along with private property and public facilities;
- WHEREAS,** as a consequence of the hurricanes and their aftermath, hundreds of people perished and many citizens suffered injuries and/or illnesses;
- WHEREAS,** in addition, hundreds of human remains have been disinterred by the flood and storm surges;
- WHEREAS,** R.S. 29:766(A) authorizes the governor to declare a state of public health emergency following consultation with the public health authority, and R.S. 29:769(D) authorizes the Office of Public Health in such times to exercise control over the disposition of human remains; and
- WHEREAS,** the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the state health officer have requested there be an appointment of an Office of Public Health, State Medical Examiner to exercise control over the disposition of human remains of people who died in or as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and exercise control over identification and re-casketing of disinterred remains;
- NOW THEREFORE I, KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO,** Governor of the state of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the state of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:
- SECTION 1:** Pursuant to Louisiana Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, R.S. 29:724, et seq., and more specifically R.S. 29:769(D), a state of public health emergency is hereby declared for the purpose of the control and disposition of human remains.
- SECTION 2:** The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals is hereby authorized to appoint an Office of Public Health, State Medical Examiner, to exercise control over the disposal of human remains of individuals who died in or as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- SECTION 3:** Such appointee is authorized and empowered to set up, operate, and control a regional morgue and autopsy facility (DMORT) in St. Gabriel, Louisiana, to receive, identify, and process human remains of those who died in or as a result of Hurricane Katrina, collected from the parishes affected by Hurricane Katrina, and throughout the state, for coroners who are unable or unwilling to handle the remains themselves, including but not limited to the parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, and Washington. Such appointee shall coordinate and receive the cooperation of the coroners of the above parishes in the recovery, retrieval, identification, interment or cremation of hurricane related remains.

- SECTION 4:** Such appointee is authorized and empowered to order and obtain medical records, including hospital, nursing home, physicians, dental and other useful medical records of possible hurricane decedents to aid in their identification and in order to establish their cause of death.
- SECTION 5:** Such appointee is hereby authorized to sign death certificates, burial permits, and cremation permits for human remains whose death is related to Hurricane Katrina and Rita when the jurisdictional coroner is unidentified, unavailable, unable or unwilling to sign.
- SECTION 6:** Such appointee is further authorized to assist and coordinate the parishes of Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, and Washington for Hurricane Katrina and the parishes of Calcasieu, Cameron, Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Vermilion for Hurricane Rita and any other parish who asks for assistance with identification and re-casketing disinterred human remains as a result of the flooding and storm surges from either hurricane.
- SECTION 7:** Executive Order No. KBB 2005-39, issued on September 19, 2005, is hereby terminated and rescinded.
- SECTION 8:** This Order is effective upon signature and shall be applicable from Monday, September 12, 2005, through Saturday, December 31, 2005, unless amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the governor, or terminated by operation of law.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the city of Baton Rouge, on this 4th day of November, 2005.



**/S/ Kathleen Babineaux Blanco**  
**GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA**

**ATTEST BY**  
**THE GOVERNOR**

**/S/ Al Ater**  
**SECRETARY OF STATE**